



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

# News Release

May 4, 2006

## **ICE removes convicted child rapist to Belgium to serve prison term** *Visa violator arrested in Orange County based on Interpol lead*

LOS ANGELES – A Belgian fugitive, who fled to Orange County before being convicted in absentia overseas on child rape charges, was returned to Europe overnight by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) where he faces five years in prison.

Van Tich Nguyen, a naturalized Belgian citizen, arrived in his adopted country early today on board a commercial flight escorted by ICE officers. The 57-year-old native of Vietnam is wanted on a warrant issued in Brussels in October 2005 for raping a minor under 10 years of age.

Nguyen was arrested by ICE agents April 13 at an apartment in Garden Grove after the agency received a tip from Interpol about the outstanding warrant. The Belgian citizen entered the United States under the Visa Waiver Program at a border crossing in New York in April 2005, six months before Belgian authorities issued the warrant for his arrest.

The Visa Waiver Program allows visitors from certain countries, including Belgium, to travel to the United States for up to 90 days without obtaining a visa. Under that program, Nguyen was required to leave the United States by July 2005.

“This is another example how ICE is working with its law enforcement partners around the globe to target those who prey on children,” said Kevin Kozak, acting special agent in charge for the ICE office of investigations in Los Angeles. “We will not allow international borders to be barriers to bringing sexual predators to justice.”

Identifying and locating immigration status violators, particularly those like Nguyen who pose a potential threat public safety or homeland security, is the work of ICE’s Compliance Enforcement Unit (CEU). Last year, ICE agents nationwide arrested more than 8,000 visa violators, nearly 1,000 of these cases stemmed from leads generated by the CEU. In Los Angeles, agents assigned to the CEU have investigated more than 300 cases in the last 18 months, resulting in more than 70 arrests.

“Prior to 9/11, the United States did have not an effective system to monitor the immigration status of foreign students and other visitors to this country -- with disastrous consequences,” Kozak explained. “We now have resources and technology dedicated to this effort and we are vigorously pursuing these leads.”

The CEU draws upon various government databases to gather and analyze leads on visitors to the United States who violate their immigration status. These databases include:

U.S. Visitor and Immigrant Status Indicator Technology (US-VISIT) program, administered by the Department of Homeland Security, verifies the identities of incoming visitors and tracks compliance with visa conditions and immigration law. US-VISIT collects travel information and biometric identifiers such as fingerprints to verify the identity of visitors upon their arrival and departure.

The Student Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) is an Internet-based program, administered by ICE that maintains data on non-immigrant foreign students and exchange visitors during their stay in the United States. SEVIS was developed in 2002 to improve nationwide coordination and communication in monitoring student visa activity.

Armed with information drawn from these databases, the CEU identifies immigration violator leads and prioritizes those that may pose an elevated homeland security or public safety threat. The CEU works closely with the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Terrorist Screening Center to identify and coordinate any and all investigations that may have a known or suspected terrorist link. Violator leads are disseminated to ICE's field offices throughout the country for further investigation and potential arrests.

# ICE #

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.*